

North Central Washington Libraries**March 21, 2024****I. Call to Order**

Kathleen Allstot called to order the March 2024 meeting of the NCW Libraries Board of Trustees at 1:00 p.m. on March 21, 2024. The meeting was held in person at the NCW Libraries Board Room with an option to attend virtually.

II. Attendees

Attending Board members included Nancy Churchill, Kathleen Allstot, Denise Sorom, Jim Mitchell, Melva Calloway, Nancy Spurgeon, and Jill Sheley (attending virtually). Also in attendance were Barbara Walters, Executive Director; Kim Neher, Deputy Director; Sheila Callihan, HR Director; Mike Githens, Interim Director of Finance (attending virtually); Summer Hayes, Associate Director of Programs and Resources; Alicia Gomori, Associate Director of Community Libraries; Aaron Floyd, Director of IT; and Tim Dillman, Executive Assistant.

Public Comment

No public comment provided.

III. Consent Agenda Items

- a. March Meeting Agenda
- b. Minutes of the February 15, 2024 Board meeting
- c. Payroll & vouchers
 - i. February payroll for \$658,008.98 and Benefits for \$234,241.04
 - ii. February Accounts Payable for \$615,825.16

Melva moved to approve the Consent Agenda.

Denise seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Financial Report

Miike gave an update on the progress of the 2021-2022 financial audit. A few outstanding items are remaining to resolve on the accounts payable. Mike expects an exit conference to be scheduled with the Finance Committee next month, and he doesn't expect anything to rise to the level of a finding. There will likely be some management recommendations for procedural changes.

Mike then transitioned to a review of the February Financials. Mike pointed out that February property taxes were slightly under budget for the month, an indication of a slow housing market. Mike reminded the board that the 1st half of property tax payments will start to come in at the end of April.

Under expenses, the district is seeing better spending in the Personnel budget than in year's past. That line item is currently 1% short of year to date budget. Expenses in the Admin category are higher than budgeted due to the cost of the audit. Public Services ended the month at 15.3% of budget which is right on track. Mike pointed out that \$44,000 was spent on the Moses Lake shelving project in February, which represents the deposit on the shelving order.

Mike reviewed Fund 646 and 647 with the board. He pointed out that 2 temporary positions for the Reimagining Spaces project are now being funded out of Fund 647.

V. Resolution 24-02-Surplus Property

Mike presented the resolution which declares the North Bookmobile as surplus property.

Jim moved to adopt Resolution 24-02.

Nancy S. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Executive Director Report

Barbara gave a recap to the board on the meeting she and Kathleen had with the mayor and town clerk in Coulee City. The mayor has secured an agreement to temporarily relocate the library to a new community clinic which is under construction. The town hopes to fund and build a separate building on the same lot for the permanent location of the library. The timeline for relocating the library is around October of this year when the building is completed. Since the town cannot guarantee a 10-year occupancy in the new space, for now, NCW Libraries plans to furnish the space with shelving and furniture that has been removed from other remodeled locations.

Barbara updated the board on the status of the Building Use and Maintenance Agreements. There are still five locations with outstanding agreements: Ephrata, Coulee City, Cashmere, and Brewster. Library staff are working with the cities to get these resolved.

Barbara gave an update on the Strategic Directions, sharing that she presented to the Leader's group in February and will be holding two virtual town halls for all staff. The administration is taking a very methodical approach to communicating the Strategic Directions to all staff, and will then communicate externally in April.

VII. Reimagining Spaces Report

Kim updated the board on the progress of a few key Reimagining Spaces projects. The Peshastin Library will close on April 15th to begin its three month refresh. The Moses Lake shelving project is on track to start in early summer. Thanks to the hard work of Moses Lake Supervising Librarian Austin Fogelsong, the project is being done in close collaboration with the City of Moses Lake who is assisting with the disposal of the old shelving and repair to walls and floors.

The Wenatchee Library Phase 2 project is underway and progressing on schedule. The project is expected to be completed around mid-June.

VIII. Resolution 24-03-Approving the Authorizing the Omak Project Budget

Kim reported to the board that NCW Libraries is submitting an application for the Department of Commerce Library Capital Improvement Grant, on behalf of the Omak Library, with a deadline of April 5th. This is the same grant that helped fund the Winthrop Library and the WPL Phase 2 remodel. A resolution to approve the Omak project budget is being brought before the board early in order to show solid documentation in the grant application of the funds NCW Libraries has allocated for the Omak project.

Nancy S. moved to adopt Resolution 24-03.

Denise seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. IT Report

Aaron reported to the board that patrons were given the capability for printing from mobile devices starting in February. He mentioned that this has created some new challenges for IT and branch staff, but it is overall a great service to patrons. On a related note, the response to and utilization of the new copiers by patrons has been overwhelmingly positive, with printing expenses exceeding what was budgeted.

Kathleen asked if this sort of response is the usual pattern when new technology is introduced. Aaron said yes and said the support requests are starting to track down as branch staff grow more equipped to troubleshoot. The IT department is continuing to build out FAQs as more questions arise.

X. HR Report

Sheila shared that Annalisa Glass, a Library Assistant at Curlew, has been promoted to the Branch Librarian position for the Curlew Library. Annalisa is currently enrolled in an MLIS Program. NCW Libraries received the resignation of Hanna Roseen from her position as the East Wenatchee Librarian.

Sheila shared that the MOU on Holidays that the board approved for signing with the union has now been completed, signed and is in effect as of March 1st.

Lastly, Sheila shared that the development of performance goals is being implemented with all NCW Libraries Administration, Supervisors, and Department Heads. Sheila will provide more details on this project in the months to come.

XI. Community Libraries Report

Alicia reminded the board about a \$25,000 donation the district received last year. Summer and Alicia worked on a plan for utilizing these funds in a way that would honor the donor's intent. The funds will be used for a pilot program to purchase books for children (0-18) of migrant workers. This will allow the LatinX department to give away books when they visit migrant camps this summer.

Denise asked how the library might be able to sustain the program once the money has run out. Alicia said that this was a one-off donation so there is not a plan for ongoing support. Summer said that the visits to migrant camps are being done in partnership with CVCH and this money will build out the collection this year and may carry over into subsequent years. Denise followed up with a question asking if all the money will get spent on the purchase of books. Summer said this was the case, and Alicia added that this was in line with the donor's wishes. Kim shared that the partnership with CVCH that Summer mentioned will allow access for NCW Libraries to 50 migrant camps this summer. Nancy suggested that the staff also connect with Epic Early Learning who also have strong connections to migrant families.

Alicia introduced Michael McNiel who serves as an Area Manager, overseeing the Chelan, Manson, Brewster, Bridgeport, Waterville, Coulee City, and Oroville (temporarily) branches. Michael spoke with the board about the Community Engagement phase of the Manson and Chelan branches' Reimagining Spaces projects, which Michael mentioned touches on every aspect of the new Strategic Directions. The first event in Manson was the Polar Plunge in January. Then community engagement days were held in Manson and Chelan respectively on February 6th and 7th. In addition, Michael joined Manson Branch Librarian Cindy Simmons at a Family Fit and Fun night the school put on. This event reached 175 people in the community. Also joining Michael and Cindy were two high school interns that serve in the library. Michael closed with sharing how rewarding these events were for the Branch Librarians and what good public outreach was.

XII. Programs and Resources Report

Summer reported on the teen writing competition that is currently taking place across the district. She shared that this is not only a great program open to all teens, but Teen Services Manager Jessica Lynch has used this event to involve the Teen Library Council in planning and project management. Nancy C. asked for clarification on if the teens are doing project management for this program. Summer said that was indeed the case. Jessica works very closely with them to incorporate their input and help them own the program.

The library is starting to feature a "New Book Tuesday" on social media. Summer mentioned that the district's "Dead on Arrival" rate (Books that never see a check out) is very high. The district is working strategically to bring that down to a level that is comparable to other systems.

Summer also shared that the district is launching a new card type on April 1st known as the Limited Use Card. There are many barriers that keep those with unstable housing from being able to get a library card, so the district is shifting what has been a Computer Use Only card to the Limited Use card. This will allow for the check out of up to two physical items without the need for a permanent address. Kathleen asked how many people this might serve. Summer said it is hard to say at this point.

XIII. Board Discussion

Melva mentioned that the incorporation of AI tools has become a bigger part of her world at work and was curious how this is intersecting with the library world. Nancy also mentioned she has been dabbling with those tools. Barbara said she has seen some information coming from the ALA and WLA lately on this topic. Aaron mentioned that his department uses it in limited ways for coding purposes. Nancy C. said she would personally love some training on best uses and how to get better information when searching.

Kathleen asked for clarification on the difference between contracting cities and annexed cities. Barbara mentioned that an annexed city is one where the residents voted to get directly taxed for library service. Contracting cities are ones where the city has entered into an agreement with the library district whereby NCW Libraries agrees to provide library service and the city pays the district directly for that service out of the city budget.

Kim reminded the board that National Library Week will be held April 7-13 and National Library Workers Day is Tuesday, April 9th.

XIV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:21 PM.

Kathleen Allstot, Chair

Jill Sheley, Secretary